CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

51

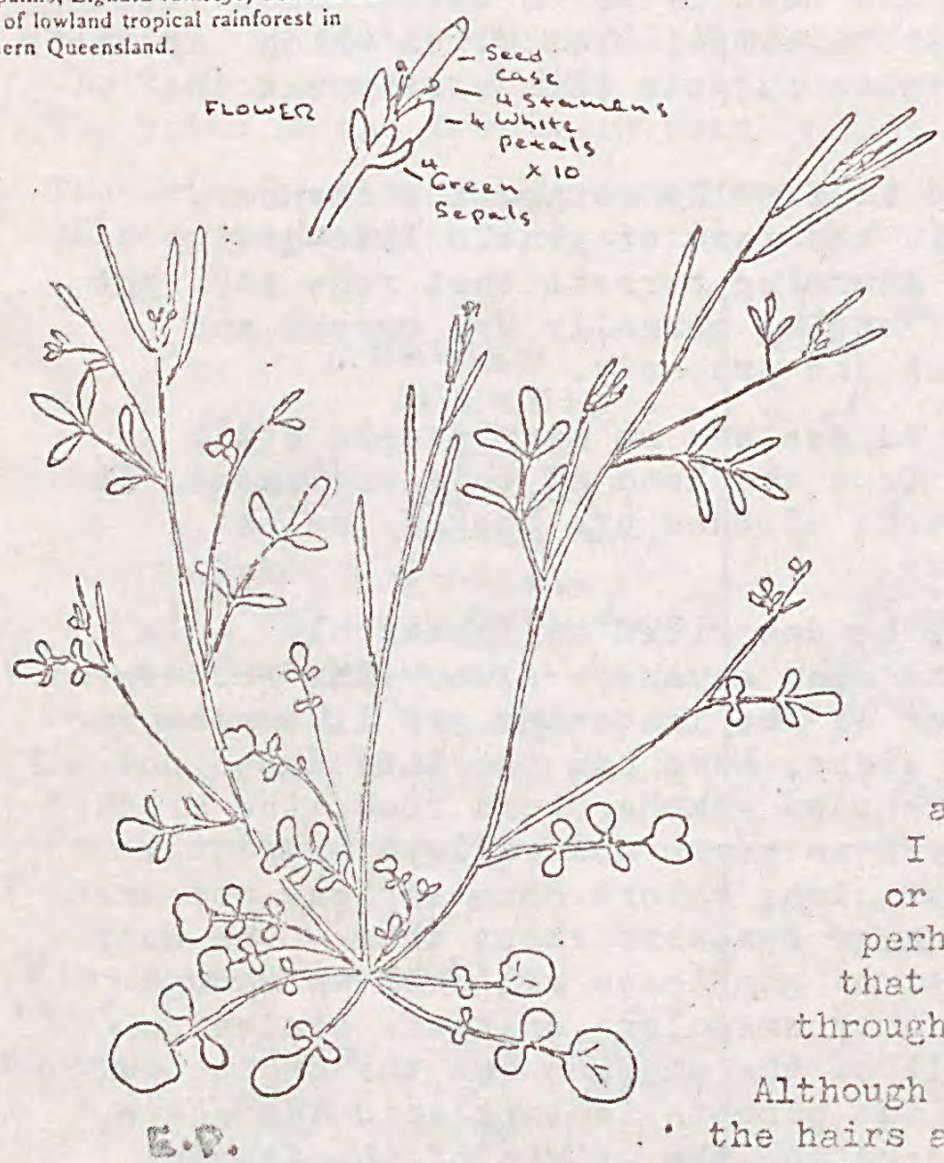
OCTOBER 1980

Fan palms, *Liguala ramseyi*, dominate a tract of lowland tropical rainforest in northern Queensland.

Plants of the Castlemaine District

HAIRY BITTER-CRESS

(Cardamine hirsuta)



A specimen of Hairy Bitter-cress was tabled at the September meeting, collected from the forest at Castlemaine North.

Bitter-cress is a typical member of the turnip and cabbage family, and is also a typical weed, for it flowers when only a few centimetres high and rapidly sets seed.

Although Hairy Bitter-cress occurs in the Maldon Forest and in Castlemaine gardens, I have not seen it in Kalimna or at Castlemaine North; perhaps this find indicates that it is about to spread through the local bushland.

Although given the name "hairy", the hairs are quite hard to see and are rather sparse. The leaf shape is quite variable, even in the one plant. The upper leaves usually are thinner and longer than the lower leaves. Some specimens have more leaf segments too.

Hairy Bitter-cress is reputed to be quite edible. It is used in a similar way to water-cress, but has a fleshier and sweeter flavour.

Monthly meetings are held on the second Friday of each month (except January), at 8 p.m. in the Castlemaine Education Centre (SEC buildings, Mostyn Street, Castlemaine).

Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the club's sessions.

From "New Scientist" 16/2/78 "In the Dry"

" To the visitor from the lush toyland farms of Europe, Australia seems to be the last place on this planet that men should expend their energy on trying to produce food. Apart from the unpredictability of the climate, insects, disease and and the menacing wildness of the country mean that food production is a constant battle which can be too often lost through the power of uncontrollable external forces.

The countryside is alive with insects- from the plagues of grasshoppers, crickets and beetles which devour what little herbage there is, to the pestilential blow flies which lay their eggs on living sheep and whose maggots then slowly eat the animal.

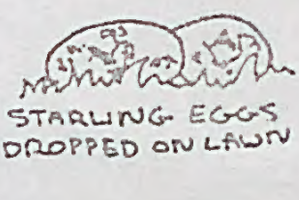
And when the "dry" ends and it finally rains, the chances are that it will not end in the form of gentle life-giving rain but in the form of a storming torrent that runs straight off the top of the soil, flooding normally dry creeks and washing away topsoil, stock and property.

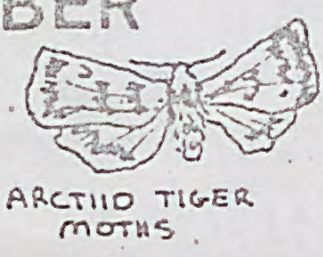
It is therefore difficult to see why so many people still struggle to make a living from the land of this continent. It is possible however that some of them are hooked on its barbarous beauty.

Much of Australia can only be described as "unearthly" - in other words unlike anything seen anywhere else. The rock forms and the often bare interior of the landscape are like massive dead old bones which, long since, have had the life dried out of them. The sudden outcrops of weather worn rock, the cracked skull-like gorges of grey, dead peaks and valleys suggest a land that was old and mature long before Homo sapiens appeared. Even the plants have a strange deadness about them - the many hundreds of different types of gum trees all look as though they are not sure whether they are alive or dead. Listening to the eerie, fluting call of the magpies and the mechanical shrieking and cackling of the parrots in this arid landscape, it is not difficult to understand the origin of the fearful religious beliefs of the aboriginal inhabitants born in the "Dreamtime" long before European man set unwilling foot on this vast geographical freak of a continent. "

(This is an extract from an article by Brian Gardner)

OCTOBER





HEATH FAMILY

Members of the Heath Family (the Epacridaceae) have these features:-

- -the five petals form a tube, with five lobes
- -the sepals are often the same colour as the petals.
- -the stamens may rise from the base of the ovary or be joined to the petal tube.
- -the inside of the petal tube is often hairy
- -the ovary is above the base of the petals.

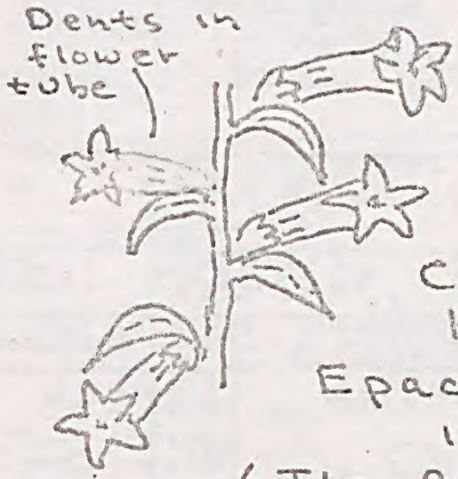
Most of the family are small shrubs or grow flat along the ground. The leaves are also fairly small, and are usually sharp-pointed. The veins in the leaves are usually fine and parallel.

The Erica/heather family found overseas is similar, but ha 10 stamens (two for each petal), and double anthers.

SPANISH HEATH

Flowers, leaves are densely crowded

(Erica lusitanica - introduced - family Ericacea - e.g. Kalmia)



COMMON HEATH

Epacris impressa

(The floral emblem of Victoria)

Flowers crowded in leaf axils →

DAPHNE HEATH

(Brachyloma daphnoides)

(In some specimens the leaves are about ½ this size)

PEACH HEATH

(Lissanthe strigosa)

KEYS to the HEATHS OF CASTLEMAINE DISTRICT

EP/2019/1980

EPACRIS	BRACHYLOMA	LISSANTHE	MONOTOCA	MELICHRUS	LEUCOPOGON	ASTROLOMA	ACROTRICHE

Part 1 MICROSCOPIC EXAMINATION OF TH FLOWERS.

STYLE FROM BETWEEN THE OVARIES

EPACRIS IMPRESSA (COMMON HEATH)

STYLE FROM THE END OF THE OVARIES

INSIDE OF PETAL-TIPS NOT HAIRY

PETALS OVERLAP IN BUD (Short hairs inside throat) (Stamens from Petals) — BRACHYLOMA DAPHNOIDES (DAPHNE HEATH)

PETALS NOT OVERLAPING IN THE BUD

- OVARY 5-CELLED (Stamens from Petals) — LISSANTHE STRIGOSA (Peach Heath)
- OVARY 1-CELLED (Stamens from Petals) — MONOTOCA SCOPARIA (Prickly Broom-heath)

INSIDE OF PETAL TIPS HAIRY

PETAL TIPS SPARSELY HAIRY — MELICHRUS URCEOLATUS (URN HEATH)

INSIDE OF PETALS DENSELY HAIRY (Stamens from Petals)

Flowers from leave-axils or at ends of branches — L. VIRGATUS (Twiggy Beard-Heath)

Flowers never at ends of the branches

- Flowers not hanging down — L. ericoides (Pink beard-heath)
- Flowers hang down — L biflorus (Twin Beard-heath)

PETAL BEARDED AT TIP and BEARDED NEAR MIDDLE (INSIDE THE TUBE) or WITH BEARDED SCALES AT MIDDLE

- MIDDLE OF TUBE WITH HAIRY SCALES — ASTROLOMA CONOSTEPHIOIDES (Flame-Heath)
- MIDDLE OF TUBE HAIRY — A. HUMIFUSUM (Cranberry Heath)

BETAL BEARDED AT TIP ONLY (Stamens from Petals) — ACROTRICHE SERRULATA (Honey Pots)

Part 2 GENERAL CHARACTERS

Erect or Shruby

Flowers LESS THAN 1 cm LONG

Flowers about 1cm long RED or WHITE, BELL SHAPED

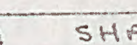
stalks erect

COMMON HEATH

LEAVES ~ OVAL

LOW SHRUB — DAPHNE HEATH

LEAVES WITH SHARP POINTS



LEAVES with a distinct raised centre-vein on under-side — LOW SHRUB — PEACH HEATH

LEAVES WITH MANY FINE PARALLEL VEINS

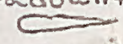
Flowers tiny, about 2 mm long — SMALL SHRUB — PRICKLY BROOM HEATH

Flowers about 5 mm long

LEAVES CROWDED, ALMOST HIDING THE BRANCHES (Low Shrub) — To ~ 30cm — URN HEATH

BRANCHES EASILY VISIBLE

LEAVES CONCAVE (⌣) on upper surface — Leaves taper gradually



TWIGGY BEARD-HEATH

LEAVES FLAT OR CONVEX ON UPPER SURFACE (— or ∧)

- Flowers Pink, in clusters — To ~ 1 m — PINK BEARD-HEATH
- Flowers White, usually in pairs — To ~ 1m — TWIN-FLOWER BEARD HEATH

Flowers large (over 1cm), not bell-shaped, red.

Flower

Low Shrub — FLAME HEATH

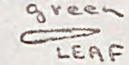
Flat growing "Mat" plants

Flowers ~ 1cm long, RED, flowers in autumn. Leaves often bluish

LEAF

CRANBERRY HEATH

Flowers greenish, hidden under foliage; filled with "honey" (hence honey-pots) Leaves dull green



LEAF

HONEY POTS

FLOWER COLOUR

RED or WHITE	WHITE	PINK	WHITE	PINK	WHITE	RED	GREEN

OCCURRENCE

SOUTH OF RIDGE RD ONLY	WIDESPREAD & COMMON	RARE	RIDGE AREA NOT COMMON	SCATTERED	SCATTERED	NOT COMMON SCATTERED	MONK Rather Rare	Very rare near Castlemaine	WIDESPREAD and COMMON

NAME

EPACRIS = ON A HILL-TOP IMPRESSA from the depressions on flower-tube	BRACHYLOMA = SHORT FRINGE DAPHNOIDES = DAPHNE-LIKE	LISSANTHE = SMOOTH (NOT HAIRY FLOWER) STRIGOSA = COVERED WITH BRISTLES	MONOTOCA = 1 BIRTH (from 1 seeded ovary) SCOPARIA = Brush-like	MELICHRUS = HONEY-COLOURED URCEOLATUS = URN-SHAPED (FLOWER)	LEUCOPOGON = WHITE BEARD: VIRGATUS = WILLOWY TWIGS	ERICIOIDES = HEATHER-LIKE	BIFLORUS means TWIN-FLOWERED	ASTROLOMA = STAR FRINGE (from hair tufts inside flower tube): CONOSTEPHIOIDES = LIKE CONOSTEPHIUM	HUMIFUSUM = CREEPING	ACROTRICHE = SUMMIT-HAIR SERRULATA = MINUTE TEETH

BHL

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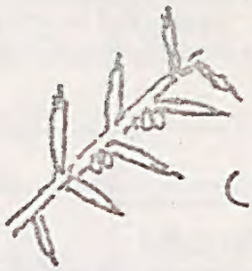
PRICKLY BROOM-HEATH

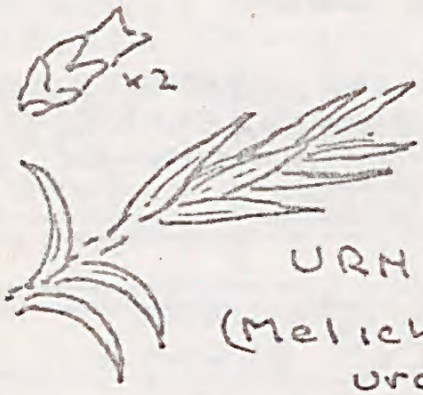


(Monotoca scoparia)

(Notice tiny flowers

TWIGGY BEARD HEATH.

(Leucopogon virgatus)



URN HEATH

(Melichrus urceolatus)

(L. ericoides)

Flowers crowded in leaf axil

PINK BEARD-HEATH

FLAME HEATH

(Astroloma conostephioides)

Leucopogon diflorus x1

Enlarged

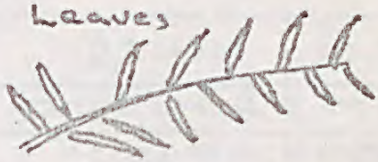
TWIN-FLOWER BEARD-HEATH

Hairy inside flower

(ASTROLOMA HUMIFUSUM)

CRANBERRY HEATH

Leaves



Flower x5

Flowers on old wood.

HONEY POTS

(Acrotriche serrulata)

EXCURSION TO CHEWTON RESERVOIR Sept 13th, 1980

Permission was given by SR&WSC to enter parts of the reserve. Although we were not permitted to go near the water, animals are, and the highlight was a view of a kangaroo swimming in the reservoir. The area to the east, once farm land but now left(for the last 20 years) was visited. Noteworthy here was the regeneration of the waxflowers and red stringybarks. Best bird sighting was of 8 Black-faced cuckoo-shrikes. Plants seen were:-

FERNS

Blechnum lanceolatum (Lance -water fern) ?

PINES

Pinus radiata (Monerey Pine) *

GRASS FAMILY

Danthonia sp (Wallaby Grass)

SEDGE FAMILY & RUSH FAMILY

Luzula densiflora (Field Wood-rush)

LILY FAMILY

Dianella revoluta (Spreading Flax-lily)
Anguillaria dioica (Early Nancy)

ORCHIDS

Pterostylis nutans (Nodding Greenhood)

PROTEA FAMILY

Grevillea alpina (Mountain Grevillea)

SANDALWOOD FAMILY

Exocarpus cupressiformis (Native Cherry)

MISTLETOE FAMILY

Amyema miquellii (Box mistletoe)

CHICKWEED FAMILY)

Stellaria media (Chickweed)
Cerastium glomeratum (Mouse-ear Chickweed)

SUNDEWS

Drosera planchonii (Climbing Sundew)
D. auriculata (Errienellum)
D. whittakeri (Scented Sundew)

STONECROPS

Crassula sieberana (Austral Stonecrop)
C. macrantha (Rufous Stonecrop)

PINK BELLS

Tetratheca ciliata (Black-eyed Susan)

ROSE FAMILY

Acaena ovina (Sheep's Burr)

PITTOSPORUM FAMILY

Rhytidosporum procumbens(White Marianth)

WATTLES

Acacia genistifolia (Spreading wattle)
A. paradoxa (Hedge wattle)
A gunnii (Ploughshare wattle)
A. acinacea (Gold-dust wattle)
A. lanigera (Woolly wattle)
A. implexa (Lightwood)
A. melanoxylon (Blackwood)
A. dealbata (Silver wattle)
A. mearnsii (Black wattle)

PEA FAMILY

Hovea heterophylla (Common Hovea)
Platylobium formosum (Handsome Flat-pea)
Hardenbergia violacea (Purple Coral-pea)

OXALIS FAMILY

Oxalis corniculata (Yellow wood-sorrell)

BORONIA FAMILY

Eriostemon verrucosus (Fairy Wax)

DAPHNE FAMILY

Pimelea linifolia (Nodding Rice-flower)

MYRTLE FAMILY

Eucalyptusmelliodora (Yellow box)
E. goniocalyx (Long-leaf box)
E. polyanthemos (Red box)
E. macrorhyncha (Red Stringybark)
Leptospernum myrsinoides (Silky tea-tree)

RASPWORTS

Haloragis tetragyna (Common raspwort)

PARSLEY FAMILY

Hydrocotyle laxiflora (Stinking pennywort)
H. callicarpa (Small pennywort)

HEATH FAMILY

Astoloma humifusum (Cranberry Heath)
Brachyloma daphnoides (Daphne Heath)
Leucopogon ericoides (Pink Beard-heath)
L. virgatus (Twiggy beard-heath)

GOODENIA FAMILY

Goodenia sp.

DAISY FAMILY

Brachycome perpsuilla (Rayless daisy)
Stuartina muelleri (Spoon cudweed)
Gnaphalium indutum (Tiny cudweed)
Cassinia arcuata (Chinese tea-scrub)
Helichrysum obcordatum (Grey everlasting)
Arctotheca calendula (Cape weed)
Hypochoris radicata (Flat weed)
H. glabra (Smooth Cat's ear)

E. P

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB PROGRAM

MEETINGS

Friday October 10
Speaker : Dr F Harrap
Ballarat C.A.E.
Subject : Loss of the Rain Forest.

Friday November 14
Members' Night As our guest speaker was unable to come. Members are invited to contribute to the evening.

Friday December 12
Speaker : Mr M. Winterbottom (International traveller)
Subject : "Indonesia"
This is the final night for the year, please bring a plate.

OUTINGS

Saturday October 4
Maldon Railway Walk.
Meet 1.45 p.m. at Maldon. Rail crossing on the Bendigo Road.
Leader: E. Perkins.

Saturday October 11.
Maryborough.
Meet 10 a.m. M'borough Caravan Park fro program details
10.30: Excursion to M'borough bush.
1.30: Depart M'boro' Civic Square (P.O.) for
-local wildflowers
-bird-watching
6.30: A.G.M. of W.V.F.N.C.A. at Anglican Hall, Claredon St, M'boro'
7.40: Launching of Cliff Beauglehole's book -"Checklist of Victorian Vascular Plants"
8.15: Guest Speaker : Mr Alan Hartup

Sunday November 2:
Muckleford Bush : Leave Railway Stn. C'maine at 2 p.m. This is in conjunction with C'maine Festival.
Bring afternoon tea

Outings (Contd).
Sunday October 12. Maryborough.
9.30: Leave M'boro' Civic Square for local bush. Lunch near Big Reef, Amhurst.
3.30: Afternoon tea. M'boro'

Saturday November 15
Grampians campout.
Saturday : Waterfalls tour
Sunday: Mitchell Plateau walk. Ask Geoff Sitch for details.

A Note from the Past — by Ray Bradfield

SUPER SPUDS

At Yapeen, Mr Holmes, the gardener, claims to have grown the largest potatoes in Victoria. They were grown on ground so long occupied by Messrs. Aplin & Ulrich - the SAVANS. One of these tubers tipped the scales to six pounds, and there were a great many from 2 to 4 pounds. Formerly the site of a sheep camp, it was later covered with a thin layer of sludge. It was neglected by Mr Holmes and carried a fine crop of rank and matted weeds. Imagine his surprise, when he commenced unearthing his crop. They were said to be of fine quality.

from files of the "Mount Alexander Mail" May 2, 1863

President : Mr G. Sitch Ph. 72 2734
Secretary : Mr S. Bruton 72 3050
Treasurer : Mr L. Bransgrove 72 2772
Newsletter: Mr G. Broadway 72 2513